

# TRAYVON MARTIN OUTRAGE BUILDS

By Monica Moorehead

April 3 — As each day passes without an arrest of Trayvon Martin’s killer, George Zimmerman, the anger and outrage around the country among the grassroots masses increase tenfold. It has been 37 days since Martin, a 17-year-old African American, was fatally shot on Feb. 26 in Sanford, Fla., as he was returning home from buying iced tea and a bag of Skittles candy. A so-called neighborhood watchman, Zimmerman stalked the unarmed teenager with a 9mm gun, then shot him in the chest as Martin cried for help. Zimmerman’s “excuse” for going after Martin was that he looked “suspicious” because he was wearing a hoodie.

Zimmerman has said that he shot Martin in self-defense because the youth attacked him, jumping on him, slamming Zimmerman’s head on the sidewalk and giving him a bloody nose. Those claims were discredited when a police surveillance tape emerged several days ago showing no visible major injuries when Zimmerman was brought in for questioning after the shooting.

The police did not charge or arrest Zimmerman for the killing based on the “Stand Your Ground” Florida law, which states that anyone who feels threatened can defend themselves, including killing someone, without fear of legal reprisal.

After the shooting Martin’s body, but not Zimmerman’s, was checked for drugs.

Richard Kurtz, the Miami funeral director who prepared Martin’s body for burial, publicly stated: “Trayvon Martin’s body showed no signs of a violent brawl.” He went on to say, “As for his hands and knuckles, I didn’t see any evidence he had been fighting anybody.” (www.cnn.com, March 28)

Zimmerman also claimed that the cries for help heard on a 911 audio tape, which documented what led up to the shooting, were made by Zimmerman. However, forensic experts have reported that those pleas could not have come from Zimmerman. A special prosecutor, Angela Corey, has been assigned by the Florida State Attorney’s Office to decide whether charges will be brought against Zimmerman. Corey is expected to make an announcement by April 10.

## What Trayvon Martin’s death symbolizes

African Americans have been in the forefront of the many demonstrations around the country since the circumstances surrounding Martin’s death, and the lack of an arrest, broke through in social media three weeks after the Feb. 26 killing. Trayvon Martin’s parents, Tracy Martin and Sybrina Fulton, have played highly visible roles in bringing attention to what happened to their son.

Martin’s tragic death has completely shattered the

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Milwaukee, March 27.

## INT’L DAY OF JUSTICE 4 TRAYVON MARTIN

# TUES ► APRIL 10

A Florida grand jury is scheduled on April 10 to ‘consider’ whether to arrest the vigilante who lynched by bullet our brother & son, Trayvon Martin, on Feb. 26.

## TAKE TO THE STREETS

6 pm ► Gather @Union Square 14th Street & Broadway

The People’s Power Tour and Occupy 4 Jobs urges all organizations, activists and communities to **UNITE AS ONE** to tell the grand jury that we demand the arrest of George Zimmerman and hold the police responsible for him walking the streets free.

### ■ JUSTICE FOR RAMARLEY GRAHAM

And All Victims Of Police Brutality

### ■ STOP THE RACIST STOP & FRISK POLICY

### ■ JOBS NOT JAILS: A Massive Jobs Program for Youth

■ No Jail or Police & Vigilante Terror

### ■ STOP DEPORTATIONS of Undocumented Workers

### ■ NO MORE CUTS in Education, School Closings, Teacher & Faculty Layoffs

■ End Tuition Hikes

## STOP THE WAR AGAINST YOUTH

For more information and to get involved email: [info@occupy4jobs.org](mailto:info@occupy4jobs.org)

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[www.Occupy4Jobs.org](http://www.Occupy4Jobs.org)

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WW PHOTO: BRENDA RYAN

# Women oppose Wall Street’s wars

By **Monica Moorehead**  
New York

A rally and march denouncing Wall Street’s war on women took place March 31 in New York City in commemoration of International Working Women’s Day, March 8. Despite cold, windy, damp and drizzly weather, women activists and their supporters rallied at the bull, a tourist attraction on Wall Street that represents the interests of the 1% — the bankers and bosses.

The rally addressed global issues impacting the 99%, especially women and their communities, who are the most severely affected by the current global capitalist crisis. These issues included housing, health care, the environment, immigrant rights, jobs, union organizing, education, imperialist wars and occupation, reproductive justice, human trafficking, socialism and Indigenous rights.

Political repression against women was a focal point. Particular emphasis was placed on the case of Cece McDonald, an African-American trans woman in Minneapolis facing murder charges in a case of self-defense, and Dr. Aafia Siddiqui, an imprisoned Pakistani woman falsely accused and convicted of terrorism. Another political prisoner, people’s lawyer Lynne Stewart, sent a message

of solidarity to the rally. Go to [www.workers.org](http://www.workers.org) to read her statement.

Many of the marchers wore hoodies to keep attention on the demand for justice for Trayvon Martin, the 17-year-old African-American youth gunned down and killed by a vigilante in Florida on Feb. 26. The rally also addressed other police killings, such as that of Ramarley Graham, an 18-year-old Black youth killed in his bathroom by police earlier this year in the Bronx, N.Y. The recent killing of Muslim immigrant Shaima Alawadi in San Diego was also raised.

Speakers represented such groups as Filipinas for Rights and Empowerment, GABRIELA-USA, Million Worker March Movement, Occupy 4 Jobs, Transport Workers Union Local 100, International Action Center, Women Workers for Peace, International Women’s Alliance, Coalition To Save Harlem and Workers World Party.

Activists from these groups and others worked together in the International Working Women’s Coalition 2012 to organize the rally and march. The coalition is launching an ongoing “Can We Live” campaign that plans to reach out to poor and working women of many nationalities in order to struggle together against all forms of capitalist oppression and exploitation. □

# General strike shuts down Spain

By **John Catalinotto**

A 24-hour general strike, involving more than 80 percent of the workforce on a countrywide level, stopped large sections of the economy in Spain on March 29. The leaders of the two major union confederations that called the strike, the UGT and the CCOO, provided the numbers.

Unions in Galicia, the Basque Country, the Canaries and Catalonia also called their members out, as did the more radical and grass-roots union organizations on a federal level, such as the CGT and the CoBas.

The strike was protesting the “labor reform,” which really means a change in labor laws that makes it easier for the bosses to fire workers. Spain’s workers already face an unemployment rate of more than 23 percent. The rightist parties now in office and the so-called socialist PSOE backed these new anti-worker laws.

In addition, hundreds of social organizations backed the strike. Starting in mid-May last year, “the indignant

ones,” that is, the mostly unorganized youth who suffer from nearly 50 percent unemployment, started seizing central squares of dozens of cities and making political demands. Though the police managed to clear most of the plazas, the movement still has an impact on the class struggle.

As a consequence, the strike was much stronger than the general strike of Sept. 29, 2010, and stronger than the general strike of 2002. Though the center-right government and the bosses tried to minimize the strike’s success, the union leaders said that the industrial sectors of practically all cities were stilled and the assembly lines at the Volkswagen, SEAT, Opel, Ford and Nissan factories were stopped. Also the airports in Madrid and Barcelona, and port areas in 30 harbors were struck, along with the railroads.

In regions of the country where labor militancy combines with the desire of the local population for political

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# NATIONWIDE PROTESTS Demand Justice for Trayvon Martin

By Kathy Durkin

As national outrage has grown against the racist murder of Trayvon Martin, protests have taken place around the country, many on a day or two's notice in large and small cities and towns. Everyone who has participated is demanding justice in this case and the immediate arrest of George Zimmerman, the vigilante who killed the 17-year-old African-American youth in Sanford, Fla., on Feb. 26.

All of these actions will help to build the national day of protest on April 10 — the day a Florida grand jury is set to begin deliberations on whether to arrest Zimmerman.

More than 2,000 protesters gathered at City Hall on March 31 in downtown **SPRINGFIELD, MASS.** The crowd of predominantly African-American youth wore hoodies and carried signs saying, “Justice for Trayvon Martin!” and “Arrest George Zimmerman!” A spirited march circled through the downtown area and ended up back at City Hall for a rally.

The Rev. Herbert Daughtry, a decades-long activist affiliated with the House of the Lord Church, in Brooklyn, N.Y., led a spirited march and rally on March 29 in the African-American community in **JERSEY CITY, N.J.**, on Martin Luther King Jr. Drive. Daughtry urged the 200 participants to broaden demands for justice for Trayvon Martin to include demands for jobs, health care and housing. Many of the youth were attending their first political demonstration.

Organized by Power99, more than 2,000 people rallied at Love Park in **PHILADELPHIA** on March 26. Mic check, an Occupy Wall Street technique, was used to relay speakers' comments. After the rally, Occupy Philly members led a smaller march to police headquarters.

Love Park was also the site of a March 29 demonstration organized by the NAACP and Power99. Two days later, 200 students and North Philadelphia community residents gathered despite the rain to rally at the Temple University bell tower.

Students and workers marched through the University of **WISCONSIN-MILWAUKEE** campus and rallied inside the Student Union on March 29 to demand justice for Trayvon Martin and Bo Morrison. Morrison, a 20-year-old African American, was gunned down in early March in Slinger, Wis., by white homeowner Adam Kind, under the “Castle Doctrine.” Students for a Democratic Society UW-Milwaukee sponsored the action, which was endorsed by American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Local 82, the International Action Center and the Wisconsin Bail Out the People Movement.

Students and workers also came out to the library mall on the **UW-MADISON** campus on March 27 to protest these racist murders. Endorsers included the Wisconsin Bail out the People Movement. The International Socialist Organization sponsored this action.

Milwaukee progressive organizations are mobilizing for an April 10 protest calling for “Justice for Trayvon Martin, Bo Morrison, Derek Williams and all victims of police brutality.” It will demand a jobs program and education, not jails for youth. The growing endorsers list includes Africans on the Move, the National Black United Front, Occupy Fondulac, Occupy The Hood MKE, Occupy Milwaukee, and WI BOPM.

Six hundred concerned activists and students attended a “Hoodies for Humanity” protest on March 31 in downtown **SALT LAKE CITY.** “Justice for Trayvon,” “No Justice No Peace,” and “Prosecute

Zimmerman” were the main themes. Their march went around the headquarters of the Mormon church, which has a shameful history of racism, and then ended with a rally at the public library amphitheater. Speakers focused on the struggles of the oppressed and the fight against institutional racism in the U.S.

A strong crowd chanting, “Justice for Trayvon Martin!” marched from Veinte de Agosto Park through downtown **TUCSON, ARIZ.**, to an Armory Park rally. There, Victor Clayton, an African-American community activist, addressed the urgent need to unite and stop the injustices that led to the murder of Trayvon Martin.

A 1,000-strong multinational crowd rallied for the Seattle Unite 1000 Hoodies rally for Trayvon Martin at Westlake Park in downtown **SEATTLE** on March 28. Speakers included Cedric President-Turner, 18, Trayvon Martin's cousin; James Bible of the NAACP; and Asha Mohamed, a Somali immigrant activist.

The next day, 300 Seattle students from Franklin High School protested the youth's racist murder.

Workers World Party members and supporters participated in all of these actions.

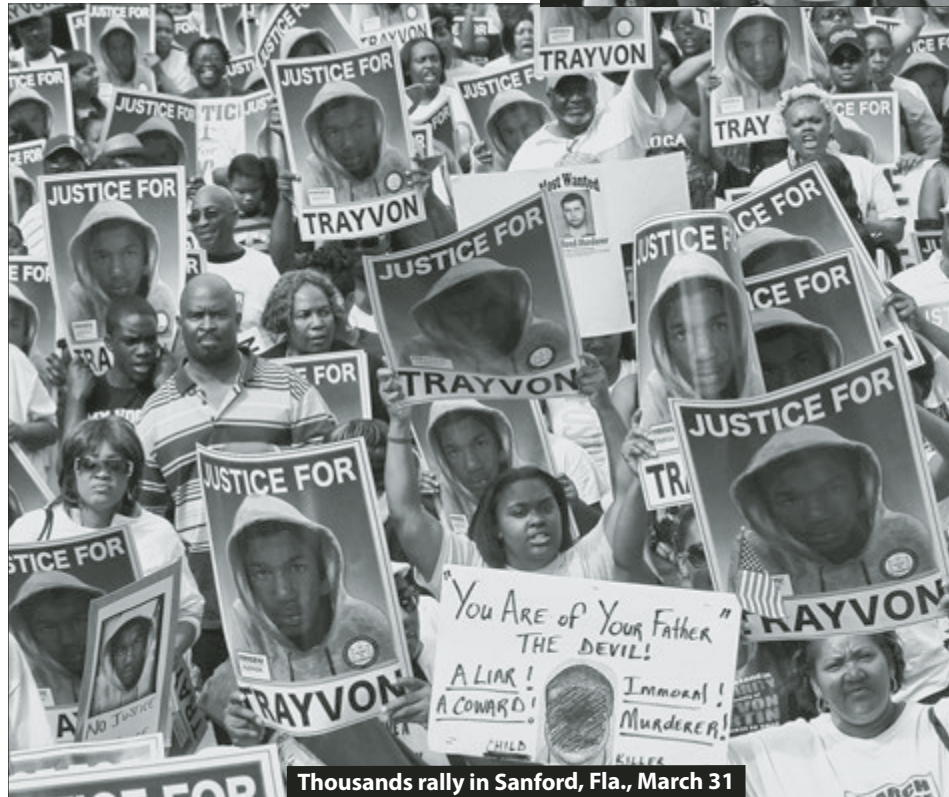
*Thanks to Catherine Donaghy, Michael Kramer, Jim McMahan, Bryan G. Pfeifer, Betsey Piette, Paul Teitelbaum, Summer Wulle and Wilden Wulle for contributing news from their cities for this roundup. See workers.org for updates.*



UMinnesota, March 29.



Miami



Thousands rally in Sanford, Fla., March 31



Prince honors Trayvon.



London, March 31

## TRAYVON MARTIN OUTRAGE BUILDS

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myth that a postracial society has emerged in the U.S. since the 2008 presidential election of Barack Obama.

Martin's death has done more than any other recent killing to expose the growing epidemic of racial profiling of youth of color, especially young Black and Latino men. Martin's death is helping to elevate the local cases of young Black men all over the country who have had their lives tragically cut short by either the police or racist vigilantism.

In so many of these instances, character assassination of the victim is pushed by the police and the media as a way to justify a killing or a brutal beating. In this case, the fact that Martin was once suspended from school for having drug residue in his book bag was used to attempt to demonize him and take attention from the real issue of Martin being murdered because he was Black.

Demonstrations have been the largest in Florida and especially in Sanford, where Martin was killed while visiting his father. In the most recent rally there on March 31,

protesters marched to the Sanford police station. Thousands upon thousands of people, the vast majority of them African American but also Latino/a and white, marched and chanted, “Justice for Trayvon Martin! Arrest George Zimmerman!”

Students have staged walkouts from their high schools especially in Miami, where Martin attended school. Many have stated that what happened to Trayvon could easily happen to them if walking or driving while Black. Others have stated that if Martin had been the shooter and the victim had been white, the Stand Your Ground law would not have applied to him in the eyes of the police. Many of the protesters wear hoodies and carry a bag of Skittles and iced tea.

In Indianapolis on April 1, Black churchgoers staging a protest in solidarity with Trayvon Martin decided to block traffic for 45 minutes. Thirteen members refused to disperse when police told them to do so, and they were arrested. College campuses are staging Justice for Trayvon Martin rallies around the country.

Celebrities are expressing outrage at

the handling of Martin's case, including pro-football player Ray Lewis; popular singers Prince, Chaka Khan, Betty Wright and the Red Hot Chili Peppers; the Miami Heat basketball team players; other pro-basketball players, Will Bynum, Greg Monroe and Steve Nash. A group of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and queer organizations issued a joint statement calling for justice for Trayvon Martin. Read the statement at [www.workers.org](http://www.workers.org).

Protests in solidarity with Trayvon Martin are also growing in other parts of the world, including Toronto, Paris and Sydney, Australia. In London, thousands are expected to attend a protest today. Last summer, a widespread rebellion broke out in London when a youth of color was fatally shot by the police. A London paper stated that while the killing was a spark, the real issue behind the rebellion was the lack of jobs for young people.

A similar situation could easily break out in the U.S., given the alarming rate of incarceration and unemployment of youth, especially if they are Black and Brown. □



## NORTH CAROLINA

# Mental health workers challenge lawmakers

By Dante Strobino  
Raleigh, N.C.

Public mental health workers from across North Carolina, members of United Electrical Workers Local 150, the North Carolina Public Service Workers Union, with support from Rev. William Barber II, President of N.C. NAACP, and members of Occupy Raleigh converged on the state legislature on March 13 to deliver a message to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services.

Workers in UE 150 have been fighting for the state to pass House Bill 287 (SB 481), the Mental Health Workers Bill of Rights. However, even after months of written requests, State Rep. Nelson Dollar and Sen. Louis Pate denied front-line workers even five minutes to share their expertise and concerns.

Since the workers were not allowed to address the meeting, they went inside the

committee room with one letter pinned to each worker's shirt, spelling out "LISTEN TO WORKERS." They stood before the committee in silence making their statement that the workers must have a voice to ensure standards for quality care.

The workers delivered packets of information and a letter about the poor working and service conditions that workers and patients currently face, including 1) continuously and outrageously high rates of worker injuries at Cherry Hospital; 2) the sudden release of several hundred agency-hired, privatized workers without immediate replacement with state workers at Central Regional Hospital, causing severe understaffing and forced overtime; and 3) the unfair discharge of 10 workers whom UE 150 helped reinstate over the last 18 months, along with six more cases still pending.

These cases have cost the state more than \$2 million in back wages, legal fees



WW PHOTO: DANTE STROBINO

and training, and have forced workers to bear a huge burden of upfront costs, including cashing out their retirement funds early.

To address the issues that face all workers in the Department of Health and Human Services, the Mental Health Workers Bill of Rights would give workers the right to adequate staffing levels, training, a fair grievance procedure, the right to a safe workplace and the right to refuse excessive overtime, among other rights.

UE 150 members around the state have collected more than 2,000 postcards (and plan to collect over 10,000 before the legislature opens in May) and many

resolutions from churches calling for passage of the bill.

At a press conference called by UE 150, Kevin Yancey, a youth program assistant 2 at Murdoch Developmental Center in Butner, N.C., explained why they went to the legislature. "The more we would call the legislative members, the less we would hear from them. We'd hear from their staff that they'd 'get back to us,' but they'd never get back to us."

## Cuts cause workplace injuries

Occupational Safety and Health and injury logs at Cherry Hospital in Goldsboro, N.C., showed that workers had more than a 40 percent chance of getting a bad injury in 2010 and a 32 percent chance in 2011. Workers' recent complaints there led to an investigation that is currently being conducted by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. These logs show a large increase in total days missed from work due to injuries at all state-operated facilities in the DHHS.

"There are a number of serious injuries at Cherry Hospital recently, bones have been broken, one staff was choked unconscious, and the severity of the injuries is horrible. That is part of the reason that I will be retiring early at age 62, after 21 years of service to the state. I want to be able to enjoy my retirement and not suffer from workplace injury," stated Larsene Taylor, health-care technician at Cherry Hospital and Chair of UE 150 DHHS Council. "All the issues that workers spoke out about today are core elements of our Mental Health Workers Bill of Rights. Our voices must be heard!"

DHHS has cut 1,179 positions in state mental health facilities since the 2001 Mental Health Reform plan was implemented, which contributed further to already severely understaffed units. This includes 321 positions cut since June 2010.

"Several hundred agency-privatized

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## Despite Washington's efforts

# ALBA holds conference in U.S.

By Thomas J. Michalak  
Chicago

The Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America – People's Trade Treaty (ALBA-TCP) held a conference at DePaul University here on March 22-23. Despite Washington's refusal to allow Cuban representatives to attend the conference, or even be Skyped in, the revolutionary island's message came through loud and clear.

The countries of ALBA-TCP include Antigua and Barbuda, Cuba, Bolivia, Nicaragua, Ecuador, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Venezuela. Their goal is simple: to create a better life for the people of their countries through human development and solidarity, not corporate greed.

ALBA represents a dramatic shift from the Latin America of the past. Since Europeans first arrived in the Western Hemisphere at the end of the 15th century, Latin America has been under the boot heel of colonialism and then imperialism, whether from Spanish colonists or the Monroe Doctrine of the United States.

Most of the more recent attempts by the people of Latin America to secure self-determination have been crushed, like the U.S.-engineered assassination of Chilean President Salvador Allende in 1973. But Cuba and Venezuela remain free, although in a day-to-day struggle against violent foreign aggression.

Ambassadors Francis Campbell Hooker of Nicaragua, Jorge Bolaños Suárez of Cuba, Freddy Bersatti Tudela of Bolivia and Ángel Rivero of Venezuela were scheduled to attend the conference.

However, Bolaños Suárez, stationed at the Cuban Interests Section in Washington, D.C., was refused permission by the State Department to travel to Chicago and was not even allowed to Skype into the conference over the Internet. In light of this, he prepared a speech that was delivered by Felix Masud, a professor at the university who co-sponsored the event.

Also in attendance were various social activists from ALBA nations representing causes such as the lesbian, gay, bi and trans movement and the Foundation for the Health of Our People.



WW PHOTO: CHERYL LABASH

Maria Helena Ramirez and Yosjuan Pina Narvaez discussed Venezuela's gender diversity movement, shown here with Dr. Luther Castillo, a Honduran graduate of the Latin American School of Medicine (ELAM) from the Foundation for the Health of Our People.

ALBA, not surprisingly, does not receive the attention in the imperialist media that it rightly deserves. Its immense accomplishments based on unity around satisfying human needs have changed the lives of millions of people for the better. Since its founding in 2004, for example, ALBA has eradicated poverty for more than 11 million people through providing universal education and health care, both programs completely dedicated to increasing the well-being of the population.

Venezuela recently declared itself to be 100 percent free of illiteracy, making it the second country in the region — after Cuba — to be able to make such a claim.

Cuba's Latin American School of Medicine (ELAM) has been instrumental in providing education to aspiring physicians and medical care to those who otherwise would not have it. After a devastating earthquake hit Haiti in 2010, student doctors from ELAM joined Cuban doctors there on the second day to provide what aid they could — free of charge.

Since its establishment in 1999, ELAM has provided health care that saved the lives of millions. In 2006, Venezuela started the construction of a sister university that would serve the same function as its Cuban counterpart.

ALBA represents a framework for how international organizations connecting nations should operate: to promote the welfare of humanity as a whole. Some

people in the U.S. have dubbed ALBA, "Latin America's G8 for the 99%." It doesn't represent imperialist ambitions. It represents what nations can do for the betterment of their own people, no matter how small or poor the nation might be. □

## March against pro-rich mayors



Outside of mayors' fundraiser, March 28.

At the Italian Community Center in Milwaukee, dozens of protesters confronted the Chicago mayor, Rahm Emanuel, on March 28 as he attended a fundraising dinner for Tom Barrett, mayor of Milwaukee. As Emanuel, Barrett and

their 1% bosses paid \$400 to \$2,500 per dinner, Occupy Milwaukee, Occupy The Hood and numerous other progressive organizations militantly picketed, spoke out and confronted the cops who were

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## PAM AFRICA

# Tribute to leader of Free Mumia movement

**“Pam Africa, Our Revolutionary Daughter of the Dust, Her Life and Work”** was celebrated in her home city of Philadelphia on March 30-31 in commemoration of International Women’s Day. The tribute began March 30 with a reception at the Charles L. Blockson Collection at Temple University. Speakers featured fellow activists in MOVE and the International Concerned Family & Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal, two representatives of the Black Panther Party, as well as family members, including her mother, Bessie Knighton.

The March 31 gathering took place at the historic Church of the Advocate, where political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal once spoke as a 15-year-old member of the BPP. Ramona Africa, poet Amiri

Baraka, Phile Chionesa, attorney Michael Coard, Dr. Suzanne Ross, Jamila K. Wilson, Michael Abdul, Iresha Picot, Dr. Johanna Fernandez and other activists recounted their experiences with Pam Africa, founder of ICFFMAJ, and the knowledge they gained from working with her. Mumia Abu-Jamal also spoke via audiotape, comparing “General Pam” to Harriet Tubman, because both women warriors had their “eyes on freedom.” His complete words, recorded by Prison Radio, can be heard at <http://tinyurl.com/7rfapmw>.

Temple University professors Tanay Lynn Harris and Anthony Monteiro organized and chaired the International Women’s Day celebration.

— Report & photo by Joe Piette



Pam Africa, right, and her mother Bessie Knighton.

# Understanding the ILWU struggle in Longview

By Terri Kay

After a long, heroic struggle, reported in many previous issues of Workers World, which included history-making collaboration among rank-and-file International Longshore & Warehouse Union members, labor and the Occupy movement, some have expressed shock and dismay at the resulting contract for ILWU Local 21 in Longview, Wash. In looking at the Local 21 contract with EGT, one should realize that it is one piece in the on-going battle of the workers against the malicious and insatiable greed of the ruling class.

EGT’s new grain facility in Longview is a joint venture of Bunge North America, ITOCHU International Inc. and STX Pan Ocean. They saw, in the small port town of Longview, an opportunity to decisively break the stronghold of the militant ILWU over the entire West Coast.

Yes, ILWU International President Robert McEllrath allowed management to get its foot in the door at the hiring hall. Additionally, ILWU Supercargoes and Clerks Union Local 40 was totally left out of the contract, despite having fought side by side with Local 21 in the struggle against EGT, among other issues. These serious concerns must be viewed, however, within the perspective of the overall victory of maintaining ILWU jurisdiction. Understanding this perspective requires a review.

### Labor-community united front: path for future struggles

Despite the concessionary nature of the contract, it must be remembered that EGT originally signed a five-year contract with a subcontractor, General Construction, to avoid ILWU jurisdiction. Due to the remarkable, unprecedented alliance between ILWU ranks and the communi-

ty, EGT was forced to cancel that contract and pay any associated penalties, when EGT was made to back down and sign the agreement to honor ILWU jurisdiction at both the grain terminal and shipside. As Clarence Thomas, ILWU Local 10 Coastwide Caucus & Convention Delegate and Million Worker March Movement co-chair, told Workers World, “EGT had had no intention of dealing with the ILWU!”

The embattled Longview ILWU Local 21 members had sparked a surge of solidarity and admiration when they fought for their jobs by blocking trains carrying grain to the scab EGT terminal last summer and in September when they again blocked trains, also dumping scab grain. They faced down brutal police, who invaded the fighting workers’ homes and tried to intimidate family members.

ILWU dockworkers from other ports responded by coming to Longview to reinforce the picket lines, shutting down their home ports in the process. Thomas said that “ILWU Local 21 set the tone in the strongest traditions of the ILWU.”

Following that, Occupy demonstrated its clout in the Nov. 2 Oakland General Strike and Port Shutdown and the Dec. 12 West Coast Port Shutdowns, with ILWU dockworkers refusing to cross community picket lines. On D12 Occupy shut down Oakland, Portland, Longview and Seattle ports and significantly slowed operations at other ports. The three points of unity of the D12 port shutdowns were support for ILWU Local 21 in their struggle against EGT, support for port truck drivers, and response to the recent repression of Occupy groups across the country.

The combined forces of ILWU and Occupy created a militant, unprecedented labor-community united front. So when EGT announced that it intended to load scab grain onto the first ship at its new EGT terminal in Longview, the united front organized car caravans ready to converge at a moment’s notice on Longview to stop EGT and even block the ship.

However, the battle in Longview wasn’t allowed to be consummated, due to government interference by Washington Gov. Christine Gregoire and the U.S. Coast Guard, as well as by ILWU President McEllrath.

The looming conflict was stopped short of execution by a last-minute deal, brokered by Gregoire, in fear of the pending struggle. Even after signing the initial agreement, recognizing the ILWU hiring hall, EGT still had the U.S. Coast Guard escort its ship into the Port of Longview, in

fear of reprisals by the militant defenders of the union. The power of this collaboration among the workers and community has highlighted a path for future struggles.

### Building labor-community solidarity

Thomas told WW, “The government was very mindful of the ramifications of our struggle ... if indeed there would have been a major showdown in Longview, what that could have done to ignite other struggles on the waterfront beyond the West Coast.” After all, Gov. Gregoire had met with the negotiating team many times before this settlement. The deal was only finally brokered in light of the imminent mobilization to stop the loading of the scab ship.

Thomas continued “There were many forces arrayed against the ILWU. We were not only going up against multinational Bunge — the grain merchant — but also the courts, the National Labor Relations Board, the U.S. Coast Guard, a scab labor force, and dealing with the Democratic political establishment of the state of Washington. It took rank-and-file members, other members of organized labor and Occupy. This wasn’t just a victory for the ILWU.”

Thomas went on to say “This surprising coalition of labor and community forces was able to outmaneuver all of these combined forces. It was only because they thought there was going to be a major showdown on the Columbia River, at the docks, and on the streets of Longview — that’s what turned the tide. In all of these forces coming together, the leadership of rank-and-file members, Occupy and the community were able to overcome ideology, racism and other internal differences, which the ruling class typically exploits.”

One has to look at this as one part of a much larger battle against the capitalist system. The role of community involvement in the labor struggle has been proven to be an essential strategy for battles going forward. The complexities of this struggle should not be oversimplified to just a bad contract and faulty union leadership. It is critical to recognize that the ports play a pivotal role in the supply chain of the capitalists. The industries which run the ports, like the EGT conglomerate and its major stakeholder Bunge, control international trade — a major component of the heartbeat of global capitalism.

Technology is putting new pressures into the mix, with the elimination of many jobs due to automation. For example, instead of workers on the cranes, the cranes can now

be operated simultaneously from a control room. The International Longshoremen’s Association has been dealing with this in Norfolk, Va., for four years, with new automated systems coming online in Bayonne, N.J., and Jacksonville, Fla.

In a related industry, struggle has recently broken out on the part of port truckers in Seattle. The truckers, primarily immigrants — Latino/a, African, Arabic and Asian — are fighting a heroic struggle to organize for safety, living wages and benefits, dignity and justice.

Along with widening the Panama Canal, which allows the East Coast to handle larger ships, developing technology will allow these huge conglomerates to whip-saw the East and West Coast in competition for jobs.

Dave Welsh, a union delegate who participated in Occupy Oakland’s mobilization for Longview, described the struggle in Longview to WW as “going up against a juggernaut — EGT and the grain cartel, the state government, the U.S. Coast Guard, police and the courts. Despite all this, Occupy and the ILWU ranks were able to push these adversaries back on their heels.”

Despite many negative parts of the contract, Thomas said that “the ILWU is still getting pensions and health care funded.” He emphasized: “This EGT struggle has shown the labor movement that if it wants to win, it needs to set up new coalitions — with the Occupy movement and the community. In the final analysis, the rank and file will have to come to grips with this contract internally.”

Make no mistake, the contract itself is not a victory. President McEllrath, who brokered the concessionary deal, hogtied the struggle with his gag orders to Local 21 in an attempt to isolate the embattled local from its strongest supporters. McEllrath has dug himself in with collaborative ideology, buying into the idea that the workers’ jobs only exist if the company is prosperous, which ties the union’s fate to that of the capitalists. McEllrath allowed concessions, such as the high-tech control room to be run by management, which sets a negative precedent for future contracts.

Nonetheless, the conclusion of this contract maintains the ILWU jurisdiction across the West Coast ports, despite every attempt of EGT and its ruling class cohorts to break it. This struggle has allowed labor to see the possibilities of and necessity for newly forged labor/community alliances, and has allowed the ILWU to live to fight another day. □

protecting the rich inside. Since Emanuel is presently engaged in closing clinics in Chicago, attacking unions and spending millions for the NATO Chicago meeting in May, rather than providing funding for growing human needs, a strong contingent of Chicago activists joined the Milwaukee protest, including members of the Chicago Anti-Eviction Campaign, the Chicago Mental Health Movement, the Illinois Nurses Association and Southside Together Organizing for Power.

—Report and photo by Bryan G. Pfeifer



# N.C. students mobilize, take action

By Andy Koch  
Chapel Hill, N.C.

More than 300 students from across North Carolina stormed and occupied the University of North Carolina Board of Governors meeting Feb. 10, forcing the unelected, mostly ruling-class board members to exit out the back door of their own building. Moments before, the board had approved unprecedented tuition hikes, resulting in the students fighting back with the strongest resistance the state has seen in years.

The statewide student movement took another stride forward on March 24. Education activists with the NC Defend Education Coalition came together in Greensboro to plan their next move in the struggle against the attacks on public education engineered by the board and the state legislature — both of which are controlled by North Carolina’s capitalist ruling class.

The gathering was dedicated to the memory of Trayvon Martin, the murdered youth in Florida. Seventy education activists, students, community leaders and vet-

eran freedom fighters came from across North Carolina. At the conclusion of the conference, attendees joined with more than 400 community members to march in the streets of Greensboro to demand justice for Trayvon Martin and an end to all the racist attacks on Black youth and all youth of color.

The meeting’s keynote speech was delivered by Waldemiro Velez Soto, a leader of the vibrant Puerto Rican student movement, which has waged two highly successful general strikes in recent years against privatization, rising tuition, police on campus, neoliberal reform of education, and assaults on the entire public sector.

“When they tried to attack our dreams of an education, we decided to get organized,” Velez Soto said. “We brought our own proposals and ideas of how the university should be run. Then they attacked, and we went on strike!”

The strikes shut down the entire University of Puerto Rico system and won a temporary hold on tuition hikes as well as amnesty for all strikers, who endured 320 arrests. In 2011, the movement in Puerto

Rico forced the UPR president to resign, and today the struggle continues.

**Uniting against the 1%**

Participating in the conference were representatives of eight public universities, two community colleges and a high school. Representatives from several labor and community organizations also attended.

One student speaking on the opening discussion panel addressed the effects of these attacks on communities of color. “I’m from an HBCU [historically Black college or university], and they say when America gets a cold, Black America gets the flu,” said Grace Anderson of Winston-Salem State University. “I see it all around me. Our school struggles on a daily basis, so the tuition hikes and budget cuts are hitting us especially hard.”

Participants spent the day discussing their experiences in the struggle, sharing organizing skills, strategizing and making concrete plans for how to intensify the fight to defend public education.

“For me, the whole day was a great opportunity to share and learn,” explained

Raul Arce, an activist in Fight Imperialism Stand Together (FIST), a socialist youth group. “I led a discussion to share what I know on the struggle for the DREAM Act by undocumented youth, and also got to attend a workshop on how to build student-worker solidarity.”

While the conference showed a rich diversity of issues, struggles and views, all attendees were unified and clear on who their common enemy is: the banks and corporations, the capitalists. “This economic crisis that they are trying to make us pay for wasn’t created by Latinos, Black folks or the workers of this country,” said Velez Soto. “It was created by the banks, politicians and managers of corporate interests.”

The conference ended with a general assembly-style discussion of the next steps of the NC Defend Education Coalition. Plans included all-out mobilizations confronting the legislature to fight tuition hikes and attacks on the public sector, as well as statewide actions against legislative attacks on university workers’ rights.

*Koch is a Fight Imperialism, Stand Together (FIST) activist.*

## While parents, teachers keep two open

# Philadelphia shuts eight schools

By Joe Piette  
Philadelphia

After weeks of community meetings and rallies, parents, teachers and students of two high-performing Philadelphia elementary schools have won. E. M. Stanton and Isaac A. Sheppard schools will not be included on the list of eight others being shut by the School Reform Commission.

As Sheppard teacher Jamie Roberts told the Philadelphia Inquirer, “It was a victory, a lesson about fighting for what you believe in.” (March 29)

Students at Harrison, Drew and Levering elementary schools; Pepper and Sheridan West middle schools; and FitzSimons and Rhodes high schools, as well as the High School for Business and Technology, will be forced to transfer to other schools.

During a March 29 SRC meeting, Feather Houstoun, chair of the SRC’s finance committee, said that as many as “four or five dozen” additional closings could be necessary.

The school closings are being enacted in part because of the Philadelphia School District’s massive spending cuts of \$600 million this year, due to reductions in state and federal education aid.

But the other driving force is the explosive expansion of charter schools, which now include more than 50,000 Philadelphia students. The SRC itself supports the privatization of public schools, describing its mission as creating a “portfolio” of district and charter schools.

The current budget has slashed music, sports, library and other vital programs, but includes \$20 million “for expansions of some existing charters and for district

schools to be turned over to charters.” (Philadelphia Inquirer, March 30)

School nurses and their supporters continue to hold “Occupy 440” rallies every Wednesday in front of the School District Headquarters at 440 N. Broad St. The rallies began last December in opposition to school nurse layoffs

The 2011-2012 school budget is still underfunded by \$26 million. The 2012-2013 proposed budget projects a likely shortfall of \$186 million, including \$110 million in increased debt service to the banks. Further state education funding cuts, which will occur if state legislators approve a proposed massive voucher system, will likely increase the pain in the already cash-strapped district.

Chief Recovery Officer Tom Knudsen says the SRC will not use its state-given

powers to impose terms on its five labor unions to solve this year’s budget gap. As for fiscal 2013, however, he told the Inquirer that “there clearly has to be a discussion with labor” about ways to cut costs.

Philadelphia is not alone. Running schools like businesses, using standardized tests in place of real educational instruction, eliminating union contracts and imposing unelected school oversight commissions — these same conditions are being used from coast to coast to create profitable educational industries for the benefit of the 1%.

Many education activists question whether such an environment can adequately teach the vast majority of our youth. The parents, students and teachers of the Stanton and Sheppard Schools, however, know what to do about it: **organize.** □

# Two great losses for revolutionary community

By Bob McCubbin  
San Diego, Calif.

On the very same day, March 26, Betty Fry and Ernesto Bustillos, two of San Diego’s most steadfast and farsighted revolutionary activists, died of unrelated causes.

**Firm defender of revolutionary Cuba**

Mild-mannered, engagingly warm and a firm defender of revolutionary Cuba, Fry was the heart and soul of the San Diego Friends of Cuba. Her home near San Diego State University, which she shared with revolutionary activist Chuck Drury until his death in 2007, was well known to the FBI. It was not just where Fry lived but the place where she hosted countless meetings, where public activities were planned, and local activists involved in many struggles and occasional international visitors met to discuss political issues and share potlucks.

Fry was a workhorse for the periodic visits of the Pastors for Peace Cuba caravans. Since 1992 these nationwide efforts, under the leadership of the late Rev. Lucius Walker, have represented open chal-



Ernesto Bustillos

lenges to the ongoing U.S. blockade of Cuba. Her special touch was evident at the welcoming dinners, not just in her always gracious remarks as host, but also in details such as the attractive table displays that she somehow found the time to put together.

In 1996, her home served as the organizing center for a bitter, months-long struggle at the San Ysidro border crossing into Mexico, where the caravan tried to get donated medical computers past U.S. customs and on to Cuba. The publicity generated by a three-months-long hunger strike by Rev. Walker and four young activists at the border resulted in an astounding victory over U.S. government intransigence. The seized computers were released and the caravanas, along with their precious cargo, were able to complete their journey to the revolutionary island nation.

Fry directly challenged the blockade herself by frequently visiting Cuba. In 2000, she traveled to Miami to join protests demanding that young Elián González, then being held hostage by relatives in the U.S., be allowed to return to his father in Cuba.

She also spent countless hours educating anyone willing to listen about the need to demand freedom for the Cuban Five.

Betty Fry’s ashes will be taken to Cuba. An appreciation of her life will be held at the San Diego Unitarian Universalist meeting house on April 21. ¡Betty Fry, presente!

**Leading figure in Mexicano liberation movement**

Unión del Barrio has been on the front lines of the struggle for Chicano/a, Mexicano/a liberation in Southern California for several decades. It has forged strong bonds of solidarity with the Latino/a communities of San Diego, Los Angeles and Oxnard, Calif., consistently challenging police brutality and racial profiling in these communities, defending the rights of migrant workers and the undocumented, exposing the racist criminality of the California prison-industrial system, demanding quality education for Latino/a youth, and promoting revolutionary politics and culture. It has demonstrated its solidarity with Cuba, Venezuela and the ALBA movement — the Bolivarian Alliance for the Americas — with many meetings and forums.



The recent death of the founder, coordinator, chairperson and general secretary of Unión del Barrio, Comrade Ernesto Bustillos, is a great loss to the people and to the movement.

In the words of the organization’s statement announcing his death: “Ernesto Bustillos was an unwavering and dedicated combatant to the cause of the poor, the exploited and oppressed peoples the world over. He was a fervent anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist and anti-colonialist. But most importantly, he exuded a deep love for his people. Always an internationalist, and a national liberation fighter, Compañero Ernesto stood tall among the struggling Mexicano people on both sides of the imperialist border.

“Ernesto was a guiding political leader for Unión del Barrio and for our movement, advancing at every turn the struggle for Raza self-determination and liberation. Before and since the founding of Unión del Barrio in 1981, he struggled every day, and he never gave up la causa, completing tasks for the organization to his final days.” ¡Ernesto Bustillos, presente! □





Belva Davis, Carlos Marroquin, Brittany Scott, Patricia Hill and JR Fleming, Tommy Cavanaugh, and Vanessa Fluker

WW PHOTOS: BRYAN G. PFEIFER

# Foreclosure fighters gather in Detroit

By Kris Hamel  
Detroit

Activists fighting to stop the ongoing epidemic of home foreclosures came together here on March 31 at a national conference initiated and organized by the Moratorium NOW! Coalition to Stop Foreclosures, Evictions & Utility Shutoffs. The endorsement and participation of other organizations was reflected in the speakers and presentations at the gathering, held at the historic Central United Methodist Church in downtown Detroit.

Conference organizers said 130 registrants attended. Beside Detroit and other cities in Michigan, people came from Los Angeles, Central Point, Ore., Chicago, Milwaukee, Raleigh-Durham, N.C., Baltimore, Washington, D.C., and New York City. International guests registered from Paris, Jerusalem and Austria.

The entire conference was broadcast live via Ustream. The recording can be viewed at [nationalmoratorium.org](http://nationalmoratorium.org).

Steve Babson, of the local People Before Banks Coalition, kicked off the meeting with an informative Powerpoint presentation. Babson vividly outlined the foreclosure crisis in Detroit and around the country, its origins, the criminal scope of the banks' actions, and why a national moratorium to stop foreclosures is necessary. Babson's presentation is being posted for viewing at [peoplebeforebanks.org](http://peoplebeforebanks.org).

A strong theme throughout the event was the criminal and racist role played by the banks and financial institutions in the capitalist economic crisis that laid off millions, lowered wages and spawned the home foreclosure epidemic in the United States. According to the Center for Responsible Lending, 7.5 million homeowners have faced foreclosure since 2007, with a projected 10 million foreclosures yet to come.

Participants discussed the criminal role of the federal government in bailing out the very banks and financial institutions that created the crisis for workers and the poor. Activists demanded an end to the silent but continuing bailout that occurs with every loan owned or backed by Fan-

nie Mae, Freddie Mac, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the Federal Housing Administration. These add up to approximately 75 percent of all mortgages in the U.S.

Homeowners and their families get foreclosed by the banks and thrown out onto the street. Meanwhile, the government rewards the banks, reimbursing them for 100 percent of the inflated loan value, plus the banks' exorbitant fees.

## Detroit, the banks & takeover threat

Abayomi Azikiwe, a leading anti-foreclosure organizer and co-founder of the Michigan Emergency Committee Against War & Injustice, chaired the first session. Azikiwe welcomed the attendees to Detroit and reported on the banks' attempted takeover of the city through an emergency manager.

Throughout the conference speakers' comments showed that the struggle to stop Michigan's governor from imposing the emergency dictator was paramount on the minds of Detroiters. Residents have already suffered waves of destruction as the auto industry closed plants, and the predatory banks and lending institutions targeted the city with racist subprime mortgages, devastating whole neighborhoods.

Detroit has lost one-quarter of its population in the last 10 years due to these factors. The conference demanded repudiation of the government's debt service to the banks, and for government to use taxpayers' funds instead to pay the workers and keep city services going.

Speakers included Detroit City Councilperson and people's representative JoAnn Watson; Wayne County Commissioner Martha Scott, author of a county moratorium bill; Michele Finley, who led the fight to save the home of her parents, Bertha Garrett and William Garrett, from Bank of New York Mellon Trust; Belva Davis, a Detroit homeowner who defeated Ocwen and Wells Fargo's attempts to evict her from her home; and Vanessa Fluker, a leading anti-foreclosure attor-

ney and fighter against the banks.

The second session was chaired by Andrea Hackett, a Detroit city worker who lost her home to foreclosure. The session focused on reports from around the country on direct actions to stop foreclosures and occupy homes.

Speakers included the Rev. Ed Rowe, of Central United Methodist Church, a longtime leader in struggles for social and economic justice; Occupy Los Angeles and Occupy Fights Foreclosures activists Cheryl Aichele, Carlos Marroquin and Matt Ward; and Occupy Detroit anti-eviction committee organizer Joe McGuire.

Also Brittany Scott, housing coordinator of the National Economic and Social Rights Initiative; U.S. Rep. Hansen Clarke, author of state and federal moratorium legislation; Nancie Koerber, of Project REconomy, which has brought homeowners and attorneys together to challenge foreclosures across the Northwest; and Jerry Goldberg, a Moratorium NOW! leader and long-time advocate for a national moratorium on foreclosures.

Among other speakers were Chicago Anti-Eviction Campaign organizers J. R. Fleming and Patricia Hill; Steve Wyatt, coordinator of the United Auto Workers' social unionism education project; Wisconsin Bail Out the People Movement activists Bryan Pfeifer, Tommy Cavanaugh, Cody Misiak and Brian Woods; Bob Day, Detroit attorney and anti-foreclosure fighter; Shawndrica Simmons, Secretary-Treasurer of the Metro Detroit AFL-CIO; Cecily McClellan, Detroit city worker and union activist in the Association of Professional and Technical Employees; and Mike Shane of Moratorium NOW!

## Tactics, actions & furthering the struggle

Among the many tactics used and discussed were home occupations; home defenses and blockades; eviction stalling methods; disruptions at auctions of foreclosed homes; protests and actions at banks and loan service providers; email and telephone campaigns directed at bank executives; turning back eviction

dumpsters; training homeowners to assist others in obtaining loan modifications and sustainable workouts; antibank campaigns and pulling money out of banks; establishing eviction-free zones; and putting people in vacant homes.

U.S. Rep. Hansen Clarke announced that he has drafted and will soon introduce legislation in Congress for a three-year federal moratorium on foreclosures, along with mortgage loan principal reductions to reflect true market value for underwater homeowners — those who owe more on their mortgage than the current market value of the home.

An open mic allowed other participants to ask questions and make comments.

Chicago activist Jill Hill chaired the third and final session on action plans to fight for a foreclosure moratorium. Speakers included Debbie Johnson, of Moratorium NOW!; Larry Holmes, of the national Bail Out the People Movement and Occupy 4 Jobs; and Andy Koch and Lamont Lilly, activists from North Carolina, who announced plans to demonstrate at the Democratic National Convention in Charlotte, N.C., in September.

Action proposals adopted included supporting all May Day actions and the call for a May 1 general strike; organizing to protest the NATO summit in Chicago on May 20 and supporting the call by the Chicago Anti-Eviction Campaign to occupy 100 homes during the summit week; holding an international tribunal during the Democratic National Convention in September to investigate the criminal actions of the banks; and organizing a march on the DNC to demand President Barack Obama use his executive authority to impose a national moratorium on foreclosures and evictions.

Following the conference, participants adjourned to 1515 Broadway, a popular coffee house and theater that was recently saved from foreclosure thanks to a broad-based community struggle against Citibank. Dinner, cultural presentations and lots more discussion rounded out the day-long event. □

# Fracking industry threatens Pa. mobile home village

By Betsey Piette

Longtime residents of the 32-unit Riverdale Mobile Home Village in Jersey Shore, Pa., read in the Feb. 18 Williamsport, Pa., Sun-Gazette that their leases were being terminated "immediately" and they would have to move by April 1.

Their park had been sold to Aqua PVR LLC, a subsidiary of Aqua America based in Bryn Mawr, Pa. The company plans to tear down the park to build a water pumping facility for use in gas drilling called fracking.

The Lycoming County Planning Commission approved the company's plans for the pump station in mid-February. On March 15, Aqua PVR LLC received permission from the Susquehanna River Basin Commission to withdraw up to 3 million

gallons of water per day from the site, located on the banks of the Susquehanna River. According to the park's owner the park's destruction hinged on the planning commission's approval.

Interviewed in the March 18 Sun Gazette, Protecting Our Waters Director Iris Marie Bloom said, "New York, Maryland, and the Delaware River Basin, where Aqua is based, have each imposed a moratorium" on drilling. "The Susquehanna River Basin Commission, in contrast, is giving out multi-billion gallon water withdrawal permits with no examination of cumulative consequences to water, air, land, climate, or human health."

Bloom noted, "High-volume hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, injects chemical-laced water underground at high pressure — a process with a confirmed current cas-

ing failure rate of 6.2 percent in Pennsylvania. Environmental violations occur at a rate of 12 per day at Marcellus Shale gas drilling sites in Pennsylvania.

"The water returns to the surface bearing toxic chemicals, heavy metals, radioactive materials and volatile organic chemicals, which is why it is often trucked away to be re-injected underground, causing a number of earthquakes. No cumulative impact study regarding the life-cycle impacts of fracking has been conducted anywhere in Pennsylvania."

An explosion at a natural gas compressor station near Allentown, Pa. took place March 29.

Adding insult to the injury of the too-short notice, Riverdale residents were offered an "incentive" payment of \$2,500 if they were out by April 1 or \$1,500 if they

left by May 1. In the same Sun Gazette article, ten-year resident Deb Eck said, "Mobile home movers have put the cost of moving the trailers at between \$5,000 and \$12,000. Even if many residents could move, they have nowhere to go."

Many of the residents are elderly and/or live on fixed income. They have lived in Riverdale Park for years in older trailers that won't be accepted in newer mobile home developments. They question why Aqua America could not find another location on the Susquehanna River to set up their pumping station.

## Residents won't go quietly

On March 28 Riverdale residents held a town meeting where they demanded that Aqua America compensate all 32 families

*Continued on page 10*



# Afghan youth in U.S. protest war

By Terri Kay  
Fremont, Calif.

Some 150 people from Fremont and Occupy Oakland demonstrated outside a U.S. military recruiting center in Fremont on March 30 at a protest organized by Afghan youth. They were also joined by a number of San Francisco Bay Area Iraq Veterans Against the War activists. Fremont has the highest concentration of Afghans in the U.S.

The march organizers raised three main issues: Protest the U.S. massacre of Afghans in Panjwai, Kandahar, as well as all other atrocities related to this war; protest U.S. military recruitment of poor people in this country; and raise awareness about and rally support against

the “U.S./Afghan Strategic Partnership Agreement.” If enacted, this agreement would extend the U.S. military presence in Afghanistan beyond 2024.

Michael Thurman, one of the veterans, spoke in front of the recruiting center about how he had been lied to when he was recruited right out of high school. Thurman talked about how the killing of civilians happens all the time.

Dottie Guy said she had enrolled in the National Guard, never imagining that she would wind up being sent to fight overseas.

The San Francisco vets Web page for this action stated in part, “We’re outraged not only about this latest atrocity, but by the drone attacks, the night raids, the ‘kill teams’ murdering for sport and collecting

body parts as trophies, the urinating on dead Afghan bodies while filming it, and the burning of Qurans.”

Abbas Darab, from Afghans for Peace, talked about the comparisons to Trayvon Martin, and “our brothers in downtown Oakland. They’re doing the exact same thing to them.”

Treal Mustafan, an Afghan youth born in Oakland, said he was “upset with what the U.S. has done in Afghanistan, historically and currently.” He asked people to not enlist, but rather to pay attention to history, instead of treating history as irrelevant. Mustafan said it was “a shame a lot of U.S. Afghans were conducive to war, but were starting to learn.”

Following the rally, the crowd marched

through the shopping center and down a divided eight-lane road in central Fremont. The marchers held the entire width, from the curb to the central divider, unprecedented for an unpermitted march in Fremont.

Although Fremont motorcycle cops tried to push the militant youth to the curb, everyone held their ground and marched several blocks. They tied up traffic but got honks of support from passersby.

As the cops brought out squad cars to support their motorcycle division, the marchers surprised them by doing a u-turn, marching back on the other side of the road, holding the entire width once more. The march ended near the military recruiting office without incident. □

## Victim of anti-Muslim frame-up Solidarity with Dr. Tarek Mehanna

By Frank Neisser  
Boston

On Thursday, April 12, Dr. Tarek Mehanna will be sentenced in Moakley U.S. Courthouse in Boston. The Tarek Mehanna Support Committee is urging everyone to be in court by 9 a.m. for a strong showing of support and solidarity.

Mehanna, a 28-year-old Muslim, Egyptian-American and a graduate of the Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences, has been held in solitary confinement 23 hours a day since his arrest in 2009. Justice-loving people were outraged on Dec. 20 when, after a nearly two-month trial, a federal jury falsely convicted him on trumped-up “terrorism” charges. Sentencing guidelines in his case call for life imprisonment.

The TMSC has been conducting a letter writing campaign to appeal for a short sentence. It has conducted a rally in support of Dr. Mehanna on the Boston Common. You can learn more about the case and get involved by visiting FreeTarek.com.

Mehanna’s supporters say he is a re-

spected leader in his community who has done nothing besides criticize U.S. foreign policy, particularly as it affects Muslims here and abroad. Because of his stature in the Muslim community, the FBI repeatedly pursued him to be an informant on others in his community.

When he steadfastly refused, he was arrested in 2008 and charged with making “false statements to the FBI.” When Mehanna was arrested again in 2009, the charge was “material support for terrorism.” There was no new information about any actions on his part to back up these charges.

As reported on FreeTarek.com, for a two-year period before his arrest, Mehanna was “befriended” by an unknown individual who continually tried to urge him to “take action” against U.S. soldiers returning from Iraq, which Mehanna continually refused to do, rebuffing and cutting off contact with the man.

An Associated Press reporter came forward with the information that the New York Police Department had sent an undercover agent to Boston to “befriend”

Mehanna and get him to agree to a terrorist act, and that Dr. Mehanna had refused. The same NYPD sources also told the reporter that the NYPD had come to Boston and met with the prosecutors in Mehanna’s case.

But the defense motion for all information about this — required under law as exculpatory evidence — was denied after a private session in the judge’s chamber between the prosecutors and the judge.

**Prosecutorial distortions lead to unjust conviction**

Dr. Mehanna’s trial began on Oct. 24. Throughout the trial, support for him was strong every day. The main courtroom was filled. Often, one or two other courtrooms were needed to accommodate supporters. During the entire six weeks of prosecution testimony, no evidence was presented of Mehanna committing any violent or criminal act.

In contrast, the six FBI informants who testified against Mehanna had committed such acts but were given prosecutorial immunity in exchange for their testimony.

The prosecution spent six weeks showing videos and chats, taken out of context, from Mehanna’s computer, distorting their meaning and deliberately prejudicing the jury.

The incessant propaganda and anti-Muslim prejudice fed to the U.S. public influenced the jury to find Mehanna guilty on all seven counts.

Supporters, who were present throughout the proceedings and who packed the court for the closing arguments, vowed to support Mehanna’s appeals and to mount a campaign to stop the government’s goal of railroading him to life in prison.

This case follows the alarming pattern of persecution of Muslims that has emerged since 9/11: the secret evidence; inflammatory pre-trial accusations fed to the press by government prosecutors; manipulation of informants and cooperating witnesses through threats and rewards; and the use of “material support of terrorism” charges to criminalize dissent. Cointelpro-style tactics of prosecutorial misconduct have produced many unjust convictions. □

## Rallies demand justice for slain Iraqi woman

By Kris Hamel

Even as the failure of authorities in Florida to arrest the killer of 17-year-old African-American Trayvon Martin continues to stoke the fires of righteous anger at racism, another killing has taken place that has touched a nerve of outrage and solidarity around the U.S.

This time it happened in the Southern California city of El Cajon, a suburb of San Diego that is home to some 50,000 people from Middle Eastern countries, second only to Detroit in that population. This time the victim was a 32-year-old woman. Her name was Shaima Alawadi, an Iraqi immigrant, a devout Muslim and the mother of five children.

On March 21, Alawadi was discovered by her 17-year-old daughter Fatima on the family’s dining room floor, bleeding profusely after being severely beaten with what police say was a tire iron. A note was found which read, “Go back to your country, you terrorist.” Several weeks before the attack, a note stating the same sentiment was found at the family’s house, but Alawadi had dismissed it as the doings of misguided youth. Despite the notes, so far

police and the FBI have not declared it a hate crime, even though doing so would give the federal agency, which has persecuted many Muslims since 9/11, more powers in the investigation.

On March 24, Alawadi died after being removed from life support. She was buried in her homeland on March 31.

At least two members of El Cajon’s Muslim community have reported receiving threatening phone calls since Alawadi’s death, according to Sadaf Hane, civil rights director of the San Diego chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations.

Incidents of bias and racism toward Muslims and peoples of Middle Eastern origin are on the increase. In 2011, the number of anti-Muslim hate groups tripled to 30, according to the Southern Poverty Law Center, which monitors hate groups and documents Civil Rights abuses. FBI data show 186 separate bias crimes against Muslims in 2010, the highest number in five years. (msn.com, March 31) Bias crimes and threats are also largely underreported by the Muslim community.

But people in the community and around the country are raising their voices to demand justice. Vigils and ral-



Students at UNC-Chapel Hill rally against racism, March 29.

lies have been held around the U.S. in solidarity with Alawadi’s family, including a candlelight vigil March 28 outside Alawadi’s home.

**‘Hoodies and hijabs for justice’**

“Hoodies and hijabs rallies for justice” — referring to the garb worn by Trayvon Martin and the traditional headscarf worn by Alawadi and other Muslim women — took place at several college campuses around the U.S. on March 29, including at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Queens College in New York.

The cases of Martin and Alawadi have been linked increasingly on social media, including the popular Twitter hashtag #hoodiesandhijabs. Hashtags #RIPTrayvonMartin and #RIPShaima are showing up together in hundreds of messages such as “hoodie or hijab — this must stop.” The Facebook page “One Million Hijabs for Shaima Alawadi” surpassed 10,000

“likes” on April 2.

At the vigil in El Cajon, Alawadi’s 15-year-old son Muhammed stated as he wept, “My condolences go out to the family of Trayvon. My candle goes out to you as well.” (Reuters, March 29)

Since the attacks in 2001 on the World Trade Center, the U.S. ruling class of capitalists and bankers has blamed “terrorism” on oppressed peoples around the world, particularly in Arab and Muslim countries. This charge was used to justify the long, bloody U.S.-led wars and occupations in Afghanistan and Iraq. Some 5 million Iraqis — 18 percent to 20 percent of Iraq’s entire population — became refugees, with 2 million dispersed around the world and 3 million internally displaced. The FBI has infiltrated mosques and organizations and framed up hundreds of innocent Muslims in the U.S. on false and manufactured charges.

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# Strong anti-war message wins at UNAC conference

By John Catalinotto  
Stamford, Conn.

More than 500 progressive political activists attended the United National Antiwar Coalition's second national conference held here March 23-25, convened under the theme, "Say No to the NATO/G8 Wars & Poverty Agenda." The conference discussion led to a clear anti-imperialist political and action agenda for the anti-war movement for the coming months.

Participation in five plenary panels, three floor discussions and dozens of workshops was diverse. Those registered included a contingent of more than 100 South Asian and other mostly Muslim activists, many of them young people attending their first anti-war conference.

The participants in general came from activity in many different areas, including environmental, labor, community, civil rights and justice or anti-repression groups as well as anti-war and anti-imperialist organizations, for this event, which was subtitled, "A Conference to Challenge the War of the 1% Against the 99% at Home and Abroad."

UNAC had established its credentials as a broad anti-war coalition with a conference in Albany, N.Y., in the summer of 2010, where a strong resolution in solidarity with Palestine and to end all U.S. aid to Israel won overwhelming support. This was followed by anti-war protests of thousands in New York and San Francisco in April 2011 that protested not only the occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan but also the U.S./NATO aggression against Libya.

On most political issues and on the action program the conference was virtually unanimous. There was enthusiastic agreement to build for the next major anti-war action in Chicago on May 20 to coincide with the opening of a NATO summit.

UNAC also endorsed a May Day action in New York that unites labor, immigrants and the Occupy movement; a June 16 march and rally called by the



WW PHOTO: JOHN CATALINOTTO

Above from left, Clarence Thomas, Larry Holmes, Johnnie Stevens and Nick Camerata at afternoon panel on Occupy movement, labor and community collaboration. Lucy Pagoada of Honduras Resistencia translates for Victor Toro of the May 1 Coalition in NYC.

Muslim Peace Coalition, the Muslim Leadership Council of Metropolitan New York, Council on American Islamic Relations and DRUM — Desis Rising Up Moving — to protest the New York Police Department's widespread anti-Muslim campaign; and protests set at the end of August and the beginning of September for the Democratic National Convention in Charlotte, N.C., and the Republican National Convention in Tampa, Fla.

A list of the titles of the plenary panels gives an idea of the scope of the conference: "The Shifting Strategies of Empire"; "The War at Home on the Black Community: Mass Incarceration, Unemployment, Stop and Frisk"; "Islamophobia, the Attack on Civil Liberties, and the War on Workers"; a "Victims of Political Repression Speakout"; and "Global Economic Meltdown, Warming, and War."

Among the groups contributing to the firmness of the anti-imperialist position were the International Action Center, BAYAN-USA, the Pan-African News Wire, SI Solidarity with Iran, Virginia Defenders, the International League of Peoples Struggle, Occupy 4 Jobs, Committee to Stop FBI Repression, Al-Awda (Palestine), the Black Agenda Report and Honduras USA Resistencia.

## Debate over Iran, Syria

The most serious internal debate dur-

ing the conference involved resolutions on if and how UNAC would relate to the U.S. and NATO threats against Syria and Iran.

On Friday night, at a meeting after the opening session, UNAC's Coordinating Committee had overwhelmingly approved a resolution drafted by the UNAC Administrative Committee headlined: "U.S./NATO Troops Out Now! No to imperialist wars, occupations, sanctions, embargoes! Self-determination for all oppressed peoples."

This resolution had strong support among conference participants. Two other resolutions were proposed as amendments, but they really contradicted the above resolution.

One of the opposing resolutions would have UNAC call for support for the internal opposition against the Iranian government; the other actually demanded "Down with the regimes" in Syria and Iran. Such stands would have undoubtedly split UNAC on the eve of aggressive new U.S. war plans. As IAC co-coordinator and UNAC Administrative Committee member Sara Flounders told Workers World, "We oppose attacking the very governments facing U.S./NATO aggression, sanctions, destabilization and media demonization."

Dozens of people lined up during the full plenary session on Saturday to take



part in this important debate, speaking for or against the resolutions. A strong anti-imperialist current, that included Iranians living in the U.S., explained to conference participants why they should reject the two resolutions. After an hour, the question was called. The conference voted to support the resolution opposing all forms of U.S. war and rejected the two opposing resolutions by a two-to-one vote.

CPRmetro.com livestreamed the conference, and recordings of the talks and discussion are available at that website. More information can be found at [www.unacpeace.org](http://www.unacpeace.org).

## 483 arrested in Brussels in NATO protest

Meanwhile, the anti-NATO action is gaining international support. According to a NATO Game Over press release, "On April 1 around 2 a.m., 800 peace activists from more than 10 European countries gathered near NATO headquarters" in Brussels, Belgium, and 500 tried "non-violently to enter the NATO compound." About 20 succeeded and 483 were arrested.

The European delegations' message to the Chicago NATO summit is "We do not want a missile defence shield, We do not want NATO soldiers in Libya or Afghanistan, We do not want dangerous, useless and illegal nuclear weapons."

*Abayomi Azikiwe contributed to this article.*

# Western imperialists, monarchies bankroll Syrian opposition

By Joyce Chediac

The very crimes and abuses that the imperialist governments and the corporate press ascribe to the "unspeakable" Bashir al-Assad government are being committed by the forces that Western finance capital is bankrolling, organizing and abetting in Syria.

The Syrian opposition's actions were recently documented by Human Rights Watch and have appeared in the back pages of major Western publications. They include bombings, assassinations, torture and kidnapping civilians. These groups are commandeering neighborhoods, fomenting sectarian strife and causing populations to flee.

Many of the perpetrators are not Syrian, but have been recruited from abroad. It's not only proxy forces that commit these acts of terror: "Western special forces are said to be giving military support on the ground." (British Guardian, Feb. 7)

The goal of Western finance capital is to break the strategic alliance among Syria, Iran and the resistance movements in Lebanon and Palestine and to make the whole Middle East a satellite of imperialism.

## Opposition kidnaps & tortures

In a letter published March 20, Human Rights Watch accused the armed Syrian opposition of "kidnappings, the use of torture and executions." The documented crimes and abuses by the armed

opposition "include the kidnapping and detention of security force members, individuals identified as members of government-supported militias, and individuals identified as government allies and supporters. They also include the use of torture and execution of security force members and civilians. Some of the attacks targeting Shias and Alawites appear to be motivated by sectarianism. ...

"Testimony collected also included kidnapping, including — old people and children held for ransom — torturing and killing of civilians. Also kidnapping of Iranian civilians on a religious pilgrimage in Syria." The letter also refers to YouTube videos of the execution of Syrian soldiers, who appeared badly beaten.

The letter continues: "Abuses of this nature, including torture, taking of hostages and executions by armed opposition members have also been documented by the UN-mandated commission of Inquiry in its February 2012 report."

According to a March 29 report in Spiegel Online International, in the Baba Amr neighborhood of Homs, the armed opposition has formed its own laws, courts and death squads. Abu Rami, an opposition commander in Baba Amr, interviewed by Spiegel, said in the city of Homs alone his group has executed between 200 and 250 people.

Other forms of terror include car bombings and blowing up pipelines and government buildings. The Syrian gov-

ernment recently charged that terrorism attacks supported from abroad have been responsible since December for eight car bomb attacks, killing 328 people and wounding 657.

## Western capitalists want one-sided ceasefire

Speaking at an anti-Assad "Friends of the Syrian People" meeting in Istanbul on April 1, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said that Assad had "defied" a ceasefire recently brokered by the United Nations, the Arab League and former U.N. head Kofi Annan. (Associated Press, April 2) Clinton did not mention that at this point the ceasefire does not apply to the armed opposition. It demands that Damascus unilaterally stops fighting and unilaterally withdraws from areas of heavy infiltration, which would surely give the opposition an edge.

Meanwhile, Western finance capital aids and abets right-wing forces every day. The U.S. had pledged at least \$25 million in so-called "non-lethal" aid to the Syrian opposition. Clinton announced on April 1 that this included key satellite communication equipment, vital for waging war.

What does the U.S. government **really** think of this ceasefire?

Writing in Al Jazeera on March 29, Robert Grenier, former director of the CIA's Counter-Terrorism Center, pushed the imperialists for more direct intervention. He described the U.N.-Arab League-

Annan ceasefire plan as "worse than feckless" and called upon those who would "help" the Syrian right-wing opposition "to climb metaphorically into the ring and dirty themselves." He added, "What the situation needs is not high-minded sentiments, but effective, lethal aid."

## Who is the Syrian opposition?

There are some 100 groups in the Syrian opposition, along with individuals. They cover a wide political spectrum — from reactionary pro-imperialist to progressive, with very different reasons for their grievances. The corporate media obscure the vast differences among them to hide their agenda in Syria and to make sure that the most reactionary forces dominate. This has caused confusion among anti-war progressives here.

Some Syrian groups and individuals, inspired by protests in Egypt and Tunisia, call for basic democratic and economic reforms such as an end to inflation, reinstatement of subsidies and jobs. They have called for dialogue with the Assad government and have opposed all foreign intervention, sectarianism and violence. The rightist forces back armed groups, refuse negotiations, call for open imperialist intervention, and are terrorizing the population.

It is undeniable that the Damascus government used force against Arab Spring protests when they began a year ago and that repression and lack of representation

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# Cuba & the Pope

Pope Benedict XVI went to Cuba, made a few speeches and left. The visit was a victory for socialist Cuba in many ways.

What it revealed, once again, was that the Cuban Revolution and its leaders are strong because they have the support of the masses of people. The turnout for the Pope was respectable but not overwhelming. As even the U.S. press had to point out before the visit, Catholicism is not a deeply rooted religion in Cuba; Santería is more popular, especially among Afro-Cubans.

Cuba's main problem is not with Catholicism. It is with U.S. imperialism, which has tried — and failed — for more than 50 years to bring down the revolution through an outright invasion, years of sabotage and assassination attempts against its leaders, a blockade meant to destroy the island's economy, and the cultivation of a small dissident group with ties to Miami gangsters and other remnants of the despised dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista — a U.S. puppet if there ever was one.

The biggest problem for the U.S. ruling class is that the Cuban people understand all this. They know that their leaders are truly on their side, having sacrificed along with them when the going has been tough. The people refuse to be bought with false promises of what they would get if they would only turn against the system that has given them a magnificent educational establishment, the best health care in the hemisphere, and a bond of solidarity with all the struggling peoples of the world. "Vende patria" — someone who sells their country — is about the worst thing you can call a Cuban.

The Cubans have just been through a lengthy process of revising and updat-

ing their legal and political structure. Proposals on all the issues were brought to the people — at their workplaces, their schools, their neighborhoods — for discussions in which they could criticize, accept, reject, amend and improve the new laws. This is how Cuban democracy works — and it is infinitely better than the bought-and-paid-for electoral system in capitalist countries that always gives the same results: the rule of the bankers and bosses over the masses of the people.

Nevertheless, the State Department and White House were hoping to turn the Pope's visit into a propaganda blitz against the Cuban Revolution. They wanted him to call for the freeing of their paid agent, Alan Gross. They wanted him to meet with the so-called Ladies in White, a group whose politics echo the State Department. And they didn't want him to say anything negative about the blockade — the U.S. calls it an embargo — that not only prevents U.S. firms from engaging in normal trade relations with Cuba but even punishes other countries that do so.

The Pope had all of Latin America to think about. He knew that Cuba is very popular there, and that if he acquiesced to Washington's demands he would lose standing in what is in many ways the last bastion of the Catholic Church. So in the end he said nothing about Gross, didn't meet with the Ladies in White, and publicly deplored the embargo — as do 99 percent of the countries in the world every year when the U.N. General Assembly votes on this subject.

We congratulate Cuba for how the Pope's visit was handled. The leaders showed confidence in the political maturity of the Cuban people, and the people showed that they deserve that confidence.

# Imperialists, Syrian opposition

*Continued from page 9*

have been issues in Syria for some time. This, however, has nothing to do with why the imperialists have intervened against Assad. It is only their pretext.

Western finance capital misused grassroots protests of the Syrian people as a pretext to build support for the Syrian right-wing. This right-wing has already brokered a deal with imperialism. It has promised that once in office it will break Syria's strategic alliance with Iran, Hizbollah and the Palestinian left and bring Syria securely into the pro-imperialist camp.

Washington has funneled money to a

right-wing Syrian opposition group since at least 2006. Exiles who received this money are now part of the Syrian National Council, which has been recognized as the "legitimate representative of the Syrian people" by French and British foreign ministries.

In an extensive interview in the Dec. 2 Wall Street Journal, SNC leader Burhan Ghalioun said he would open up Syria to the West, end Syria's strategic relationship with Iran and with the Lebanese and Palestinian resistance, and realign Syria with the reactionary Arab regimes in the Gulf and in the Arab League.

### What is the 'Free Syrian Army'?

SNC is connected to the so-called "Free Syrian Army," which has rear bases in Turkey and is funded by the monarchies of Saudi Arabia and Qatar. Some reports have exaggerated the number of deserters from Syria's army, claiming as many as 25,000. Yet Aljazeera, which reports favorably about the opposition, reported on Nov. 16, 2011, that fewer than 1,000 deserters from the Syrian Army have joined the FSA. According to the March 2 New York Times, the number of Syrian troops absent without leave is about the normal number expected during a war.

There are, however, "hundreds of foreign fighters who have attached themselves to the FSA. ... The Sunni volunteers came primarily from Iraq and Lebanon with a few from Saudi Arabia," according to a Feb. 15 report in Spiegel Online. These forces are proxies for imperialist interests in Syria and in the region. □

# BRICS summit opposes intervention in Syria, Iran

By Abayomi Azikiwe  
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

New Delhi, India, was the venue for the fourth BRICS Summit, which convened on March 29. BRICS stands for Brazil, the Russian Federation, India, China and South Africa, which together house 43 percent of the world's population and are playing a greater role within a world economic system still dominated by the capitalist mode of production and social relations.

The Republic of South Africa was incorporated into the organization in 2010, the only African state among the group. Brazil is the only country from Latin America.

One of the key points of departure for the BRICS Summit was its disagreement with the United States and NATO over the resolution of the current situation in Syria. The New Delhi gathering categorically opposed Western military intervention in Syria and issued statements related to the ongoing threats against the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The New Delhi Declaration said: "We express our deep concern at the current situation in Syria and call for an immediate end to all violence and violation of human rights in that country. Global interests would best be served by dealing with the crisis through peaceful means that encourage broad national dialogues that reflect the legitimate aspirations of all sections of Syrian society and respect Syrian independence, territorial integrity and sovereignty." (Delhi Declaration, March 29)

In Section 22 of the declaration, the BRICS Summit took up the current threats being made by the U.S. and other Western states toward Iran. It said: "The situation concerning Iran cannot be allowed to escalate into conflict, the disastrous consequences of which will be in no one's interest. Iran has a crucial role to play for the peaceful development and prosperity of a region of high political and economic relevance."

BRICS further stressed, "We recognize Iran's right to peaceful uses of nuclear energy consistent with its international obligations, and support resolution of the issues involved through political and diplomatic means and dialogue between the parties concerned, including between the IAEA and Iran and in accordance with the provisions of the relevant U.N. Security Council resolutions."

This declaration contrasts with the proceedings of the so-called "Friends of Syria" meeting in Istanbul on March 31-April 1, when the U.S. and other imperialist countries escalated their threats against Syria and openly admitted they would

supply military assistance to Syrian opposition groups that are fighting the government in Damascus.

### Character of the BRICS states

The BRICS states are playing a greater role in the areas of manufacturing and world trade. All of them, with the exception of the People's Republic of China, are thoroughly capitalist.

Brazil, the only Latin American BRICS country, has a government led by the Workers Party, but its economy is heavily dominated by private capital. India has made tremendous strides in industrial and technological development over the last three decades but remains a capitalist society with great extremes of wealth and poverty.

South Africa, which made a historical contribution to the global struggle against racism when the masses overthrew the apartheid system in 1994, has remained integrated into the world capitalist system. Nonetheless, the ruling African National Congress (ANC) maintains strong links with the masses organized within the trade union movement and strong civil society and youth organizations.

Although capitalism has been restored in Russia, there remain serious contradictions between Moscow and the U.S. as well as the imperialist states in Europe. Russia opposed the war against Libya that began in March of 2011, although it did not use its veto to stop the U.N. Security Council resolution used by the imperialists to attack Libya. Since the disastrous conquest of Libya by the U.S. and NATO, Russia has vetoed similar efforts to provide a pseudolegal rationale for war against Syria and Iran.

### Economic agreements of the BRICS summit

The BRICS states have laid out ambitious plans to coordinate economic development strategies that are designed to lessen dependence upon the imperialist states. There are efforts underway to facilitate trade outside the dollar and the euro.

Section five of the New Delhi Declaration points out that "while the BRICS recovered relatively quickly from the global crisis, the growth prospects worldwide have again got dampened by market instability, especially in the eurozone."

The Summit placed the blame for the ongoing economic crisis on the Western industrialized states.

Within the capitalist states themselves, the workers and youth are becoming more class conscious and active. The general strikes in Greece, Portugal and Spain, along with mass demonstrations and rebellions in Britain and France, illustrate that the crisis is not subsiding. □

# Fracking threatens Pa. mobile homes

*Continued from page 7*

for the full costs of moving or allow them to remain in their homes without disrupting their lives with the pumping station.

Nathan Sooy, from the environmental group Clean Water Action, noted that Aqua America "will make hundreds of thousands of dollars off this deal. They can afford to give just compensation." Sooy suggested taking residents' demands to the company's headquarters.

Under growing public pressure, the company extended the deadline to June 1. Some residents said they absolutely cannot afford to move and that they won't leave at all. □

# General strike shuts down Spain

*Continued from page 2*

cal independence or at least autonomy from the centralized Spanish state, the strike action was especially strong. In the Basque Country, for example, the Basque unions say that 90 percent of workers were out in the industrial sector, with Volkswagen, Mercedes-Benz and Michelin closing completely.

Electricity use dropped 36 percent for the whole region, a strong sign of a successful strike.

There were also massive demonstra-

tions in the four major cities of the Basque Country — Bilbao, Pamplona, Vitoria and San Sebastian.

Throughout the Spanish state, there were mass demonstrations backing the strike. And police, in an attempt to break the strike, intervened brutally against picketing strikers. Reports say 58 strikers were arrested and some injured.

The CCOO and UGT leaders are demanding that the government open negotiations with them to discuss changing the new labor law. If not, they say, there will be another labor action by May 1. □



## The struggle in China

# Capitalist crisis versus planning

By Fred Goldstein

As contradictions mount in the global capitalist economy, they are reflected in China. The factional struggle in the Chinese leadership can only be understood as a struggle over which way to go forward and how to contain and resolve the mounting economic and social contradictions arising out of capitalist development.

The Chinese economy has been growing on a dual basis. First, it is based on centrally planned guidance designed to develop the productive forces and the material foundations for a society encompassing 1.3 billion people. However, since the victory of Deng Xiaoping and the “capitalist road” faction in 1978, planning has been increasingly based on the central government fostering and attempting to manage capitalism and the capitalist market as the means for national development.

The central government, through control of interest rates, credit, taxation and vast state-owned enterprises, both guides the economy toward broad economic and social goals and fosters capitalist development. The latter means class exploitation, inequality and corruption. The present political struggle is over which side of this contradiction to strengthen.

This complex subject will be discussed at length in subsequent articles. But suffice it to say that the so-called “reform” groupings in China — with the enthusiastic support of world imperialism and global finance capital — want to move away from state intervention, planning and central guidance and go further toward turning the fate of China over to the capitalist market, both internally and externally.

In our last article we covered the fact that Bo Xilai was summarily ousted from his post as Chinese Communist Party Secretary of Chongqing. This was a blow against the growing forces in the CCP and throughout China who want to combine the use of the capitalist market with social and economic planning and state intervention in order to deal with growing inequality and who emphasize the needs of the masses. In Bo’s case, this economic orientation was combined with a popular attempt to revive Maoist culture and so-

cialist values.

In China today, the concept of planned guidance of the broad direction of the economy and its various sectors is a drastic modification from the direct economic planning initiated after the triumph of the great Chinese Revolution in 1949. At the same time, it is an attempt to retain the planning principle as the fundamental framework guiding the overall development of the Chinese economy.

Consider just some of the goals and objectives outlined by the 12th Five Year Plan for 2011-2015, and the antagonism between planning and the anarchy of the capitalist market becomes utterly transparent. This plan was developed beginning in October 2010 and was approved by the National People’s Congress in March 2011.

The government is planning to devote 4 trillion renminbi (\$158.7 billion) to the development of seven Strategic Emerging Industries: biotechnology, new energy, high-end manufacturing equipment, energy conservation and environmental protection, clean-energy vehicles and next-generation internet technology. (APCO worldwide, Dec. 10, 2010)

An article in the March 4, 2011, New York Times detailed the plan’s goals, including:

- A 19.1 percent cut in the amount of energy used per unit of economic growth and a rapid expansion of the service economy.
- Building a national nanotechnology research center, 50 engineering centers, 32 national engineering laboratories and 56 other labs focusing on technologies like digital television and high-speed internet.
- Laying 621,000 miles of new fiber-optic cable and adding 35 million new broadband ports for a total of 223 million.
- A cap on total energy use, especially limiting the burning of coal.

The development of well-equipped statistical and monitoring systems to gauge greenhouse gas emissions.

Accelerated construction of sewage treatment plants, the retrofitting of coal-fired power plants with pollution controls,

## PART 2

and the continuation of a pilot project to develop low-carbon cities.

In the previous period the state had opened 3,100 miles of new railroads and 74,600 miles of highways, completed 230,000 sports and fitness projects for rural residents, and built or renovated 891 hospitals and 1,228 health clinics.

In the realm of social welfare, the broad goals are to increase consumption from 35 percent of the gross domestic product to between 50 percent and 55 percent by increasing minimum wages, health care services and social welfare payments of various kinds.

Of course, it goes without saying that under a genuinely socialist government, workers would have their fundamental economic rights guaranteed as political rights. But those rights were largely overturned by the reforms that developed in China after 1978. Instead, in the environment of the capitalist market — with its mountains of corruption of government and party officials — the welfare of the workers and peasants has to be built up slowly and painfully through an uphill battle, which happens only through the intervention of the state. (More on this in future articles.)

Whether or not the government achieves the precise goals set out is not the issue. The point is that such sweeping social and economic goals could not possibly be handed over to profit-driven capitalists and the anarchy of the commodity market. The bosses would seek the highest rate of profit. They would never voluntarily raise wages, improve working conditions, build hospitals, clinics, rural fitness centers or anything that did not bring a profit.

### China’s response to 2008-2009 world capitalist crisis

To grasp the seriousness of the proposals to further limit planning and intervention by the state, it is only necessary to consider what happened during the world capitalist financial and economic crisis of 2008 and 2009, when the global crisis of capitalist overproduction and the financial collapse invaded China.

More than 20 million workers lost their jobs, mainly in manufacturing and predominantly in coastal provinces such as Guangdong, where special economic zones had been set up so imperialist corporations, companies from Taiwan, Hong Kong and South Korea, and other exploiters could take advantage of low-wage migrant labor flooding in from the rural interior.

During this period production of world capitalism dropped more than it had in 70 years. Tens of millions of workers worldwide were thrown onto unemployment lines. Most of them are still there. Bankruptcy followed bankruptcy, and the capitalist system has still not recovered.

What happened in China? When the crisis hit, China’s central planners went into motion. Plans drafted as far back as 2003 to go into effect in future years were pushed forward and implemented.

Nicholas Lardy, a bourgeois China expert from the prestigious Peterson Institute for International Economics, describes how consumption in China actually grew during the crisis of 2008-2009, wages went up, and the government created enough jobs to compensate for the layoffs caused by the global crisis:

“In a year in which GDP expansion [in China] was the slowest in almost a decade, how could consumption growth in 2009 have been so strong in relative terms? How could this happen at a time when employ-

ment in export-oriented industries was collapsing, with a survey conducted by the Ministry of Agriculture reporting the loss of 20 million jobs in export manufacturing centers along the southeast coast, notably in Guangdong Province? The relatively strong growth of consumption in 2009 is explained by several factors. First, the boom in investment, particularly in construction activities, appears to have generated additional employment sufficient to offset a very large portion of the job losses in the export sector. For the year as a whole the Chinese economy created 11.02 million jobs in urban areas, very nearly matching the 11.13 million urban jobs created in 2008.

“Second, while the growth of employment slowed slightly, wages continued to rise. In nominal terms wages in the formal sector rose 12 percent, a few percentage points below the average of the previous five years (National Bureau of Statistics of China 2010f, 131). In real terms the increase was almost 13 percent. Third, the government continued its programs of increasing payments to those drawing pensions and raising transfer payments to China’s lowest-income residents. Monthly pension payments for enterprise retirees increased by RMB120, or 10 percent, in January 2009, substantially more than the 5.9 percent increase in consumer prices in 2008. This raised the total payments to retirees by about RMB75 billion. The Ministry of Civil Affairs raised transfer payments to about 70 million of China’s lowest-income citizens by a third, for an increase of RMB20 billion in 2009 (Ministry of Civil Affairs 2010).” (“Sustaining China’s Economic Growth after the Global Financial Crisis,” Kindle Locations 664-666, Peterson Institute for International Economics)

The Ministry of Railroads introduced eight specific plans, to be completed in 2020, to be implemented in the crisis. The World Bank called it “perhaps the biggest single planned program of passenger rail investment there has ever been in one country.” In addition, ultra-high-voltage grid projects were undertaken, among other advances.

The lesson is that while the anarchy of production of world capitalism invaded China, the rational and meticulously developed plans drawn up for social use overcame the anarchy of the capitalist market. This not only protected the masses from a protracted, massive unemployment crisis, but it actually continued the process of raising the standard of living during a time when hundreds of millions of workers throughout the entire capitalist world were left helpless and traumatized by the crisis of capitalist overproduction.

In Marxist terms the principle of planning, established by the Chinese socialist revolution of 1949 — even though it has been watered down to the practice of “guidance” — overcame what Marx called the law of labor value, the very law that governs the operation of capitalism itself. The Chinese leaders were compelled, and had the capability, to use rational planning based on satisfying human need to overcome the disaster brought about by their own policy of relying on the world capitalist market.

*To be continued.*

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## N.C. mental health workers

*Continued from page 4*

workers were let go by Central Regional Hospital. However, they did not hire nearly enough state workers to replace them. Most units are understaffed by a handful of workers,” stated Bernell Terry, health-care technician at Central Regional Hospital, and UE 150 Chapter Vice President. “We were already understaffed before all

the agency workers were let go. This has forced us to be severely understaffed.”

The lack of adequate resources and fair standards, as described in the Mental Health Workers Bill of Rights, is the true cause of the serious problems undermining the efforts by workers to provide quality care to mental health patients and patients with disabilities. The department and the media like to blame the workers.

The letter delivered by UE 150 members calls on the committee to do the following before the beginning of the May legislative session: 1) recommend passage of the Bill of Rights to the standing committees; 2) investigate the number of workers who have been unfairly fired, who quit or who have retired early over the last two years as a result of poor working conditions and a hostile work environment; and 3) send delegations of legislators to all state mental health facilities to hear directly from the workers, without interference by management, about the working conditions they face that make it too difficult to provide quality care.

The workers in the union will be meeting to discuss the next steps to assure their voices are heard. □

## Justice for Iraqi

*Continued from page 8*

It is within the context of imperialist wars and occupations, racism and national oppression, chauvinism and religious bigotry — all of it cultivated and promoted by the capitalist ruling class, or the 1%, as those in the Occupy Wall Street movement refer to them — that the killings of both Martin and Alawadi must be placed. A growing people’s movement against racism will help unite the 99% to fight back against the capitalist system that is the root of all racism, oppression and exploitation.

Justice for Shaima Alawadi! Justice for Trayvon Martin! □



## LA LUCHA EN CHINA: Crisis capitalista versus planificación

Por Fred Goldstein

*La siguiente es la 2da parte de una serie sobre la lucha por el liderazgo en China.*

Al acumularse las contradicciones en la economía capitalista mundial, estas se reflejan en China. La lucha entre facciones en el liderazgo chino sólo puede entenderse como una lucha sobre qué camino a seguir y cómo contener y resolver las crecientes contradicciones económicas y sociales derivadas del desarrollo capitalista.

La economía China ha estado creciendo de forma dual. Primero, se basa en la orientación de una planificación centralizada diseñada para desarrollar las fuerzas productivas y las bases materiales para una sociedad que abarca 1.3 mil millones de personas. Sin embargo, desde la victoria de Deng Xiaoping y la facción de “el camino capitalista” en 1978, la planificación se ha basado cada vez más en que el Gobierno central adopte e intente administrar el capitalismo y el mercado capitalista como forma para el desarrollo nacional.

El gobierno central, a través del control de las tasas de interés, del crédito, de los impuestos y de las grandes empresas estatales, orienta la economía hacia amplias metas económicas y sociales, así como fomenta el desarrollo capitalista. Esto último implica la explotación de clase, la desigualdad y la corrupción. La lucha política actual es sobre cuál lado de estas contradicciones se fortalecerá.

Este complejo tema se examinará detenidamente en artículos futuros. Pero baste decir que las agrupaciones denominadas “pro reformas” en China, con el apoyo entusiasta del imperialismo mundial y el capital financiero global — desean alejarse de la intervención, la orientación central y la planificación del Estado y profundizar la entrega del destino de China al mercado capitalista tanto interna como externamente.

En nuestro último artículo cubrimos el hecho de que Bo Xilai fue expulsado sumariamente de su cargo como Secretario del Partido Comunista Chino en Chongqing. Este fue un golpe en contra de las crecientes fuerzas en el PCC y en toda China que quieren combinar el uso del mercado capitalista con la planificación económica y social y la intervención del Estado a fin de lidiar con la creciente desigualdad y quienes enfatizan [cubrir] las necesidades de las masas. En el caso de Bo, esta orientación económica se combinó con un intento popular de revivir la cultura maoísta y los valores socialistas.

Hoy en China, el concepto de la orientación planificada de la dirección general de la economía y sus distintos sectores, es una modificación drástica de la planificación económica directa iniciada tras el triunfo de la Gran Revolución China de 1949. Al mismo tiempo, es un intento de mantener el principio de planificación como el marco fundamental que guía el desarrollo global de la economía China.

Si vemos sólo algunas de las metas y objetivos trazados en el XII Plan de Cinco Años 2011-2015, el antagonismo entre la planificación y la anarquía del mercado capitalista se vuelve completamente

transparente. Este plan fue desarrollado comenzando en octubre del 2010 y aprobado por la Asamblea Nacional Popular en marzo del 2011.

El Gobierno planea dedicar 4 billones de ‘renminbi’ (158,7 mil millones de dólares) para el desarrollo de siete Industrias Estratégicas Emergentes: biotecnología, nueva energía, equipos de fabricación de alta calidad, conservación de energía y protección del medioambiente, vehículos de energía limpia y tecnología de internet de próxima generación. (APCO en todo el mundo, 10 de diciembre de 2010)

Un artículo en la edición del New York Times del 4 de marzo de 2011, detalla los objetivos del plan, incluyendo:

- Un recorte del 19.1 por ciento en la cantidad de energía utilizada por unidad de crecimiento económico y una rápida expansión de la economía de servicio.
- Construcción de un centro de investigación nacional de nanotecnología, 50 centros de ingeniería, 32 laboratorios nacionales de ingeniería y otros 56 laboratorios que se enfocarán en tecnologías como televisión digital e internet de alta velocidad.
- Tendido de 621.000 millas de cable de fibra óptica nuevo y la adición de 35 millones de puertos de banda ancha nuevos para un total de 223 millones.
- Un límite en la utilización total de energía, especialmente limitando la quema de carbón.
- El desarrollo de sistemas estadísticos y de vigilancia equipados para medir las emisiones de gases de efecto invernadero.
- La construcción acelerada de plantas de tratamiento de aguas residuales, la readaptación con controles de contaminación de las plantas de energía alimentadas con carbón y la continuación de un proyecto piloto para desarrollar ciudades de baja emisión de carbono.

En el período anterior el Estado había abierto 4.989 kilómetros de nuevas vías férreas y 120.057 kilómetros de carreteras, completó 230.000 proyectos deportivos y de gimnasio para los/as residentes rurales, y construyó o renovó 891 hospitales y 1.228 clínicas de salud.

En el ámbito del bienestar social, los objetivos generales son aumentar el consumo de 35 por ciento del producto interno bruto a entre 50 y 55 por ciento mediante el aumento de los salarios mínimos, los servicios de atención médica y los pagos de bienestar social de diversos tipos.

Por supuesto, huelga decir que bajo un gobierno auténticamente socialista, los/as trabajadores/as tendrían sus derechos económicos fundamentales garantizados como derechos políticos. Pero esos derechos fueron revocados en gran medida por las reformas que se desarrollaron en China después de 1978. En cambio, en el entorno del mercado capitalista, con sus montañas de corrupción de funcionarios de gobierno y del Partido, el bienestar de los/as trabajadores/as y el campesinado tiene que ser construido lenta y dolorosamente a través de una dura batalla, que ocurre sólo a través de la intervención del Estado. (Más sobre esto en próximos artículos).

Que el gobierno logre los objetivos precisos que se estableció o no, no es la cuestión. El punto es que esos objetivos sociales y económicos radicales no pueden ser entregados a capitalistas motivados por ganancias y a la anarquía del mercado de productos de consumo. Los empresarios buscarían la tasa de ganancias más alta. Nunca voluntariamente aumentarían los salarios, mejorarían las condiciones de trabajo, construirían hospitales, clínicas, gimnasios rurales o nada que no produzca ganancias.

### Respuesta de China a la crisis capitalista mundial de 2008-09

Para captar la seriedad de las propuestas de limitar aún más la planificación y la intervención del Estado, sólo es necesario tener en cuenta lo que sucedió durante la crisis económica capitalista mundial y financiera de 2008 y 2009, cuando la crisis mundial de sobreproducción capitalista y el colapso financiero invadieron a China.

Más de 20 millones de trabajadores/as perdieron sus empleos, principalmente en el sector manufacturero y predominantemente en provincias costeras como Guangdong, donde se habían establecido zonas económicas especiales para que corporaciones imperialistas, empresas de Taiwán, Hong Kong y Corea del Sur, y otros explotadores pudieran aprovecharse de la mano de obra barata de los/as migrantes que inundaban la provincia llegando desde el interior rural.

Durante este período la producción del capitalismo mundial bajó más de lo que había bajado en 70 años. Decenas de millones de trabajadores/as en todo el mundo fueron arrojados/as a las filas del desempleo. La mayoría de ellos/as todavía está allí. Quiebras tras quiebras, y el sistema capitalista aún no se ha recuperado.

¿Qué sucedió en China? Cuando la crisis llegó, los planificadores centrales de China entraron en acción. Los planes redactados tan temprano como en 2003 para entrar en vigor en el futuro fueron impulsados e implementados.

Nicholas Lardy, un experto burgués sobre China del prestigioso Instituto Peterson para Economía Internacional, describe cómo el consumo en China creció durante la crisis de 2008-09. Subieron los salarios y el gobierno creó suficientes empleos para compensar los despidos provocados por la crisis global:

“En un año en que la expansión del PIB [en China] fue la más lenta en casi una década, ¿cómo el crecimiento del consumo en 2009 pudo haber sido tan fuerte en términos relativos? ¿Cómo pudo ocurrir esto en un momento en que el empleo en las industrias orientadas a la exportación estaba colapsando, con una encuesta realizada por el Ministerio de Agricultura que informaba la pérdida de 20 millones de empleos en centros de manufactura para la exportación a lo largo de la costa sudeste, en particular en la provincia de Guangdong? El crecimiento relativamente fuerte del consumo en 2009 se explica por varios factores. Primero, el auge en la inversión, particularmente en las actividades de construcción, parece haber generado suficientes empleos para com-

pensar una porción muy grande de las pérdidas de empleo en el sector de exportación. Para el año en total, la economía china creó 11,02 millones de empleos en las zonas urbanas, casi empatando los 11,13 millones de empleos urbanos creados en 2008.

“En segundo lugar, aunque el crecimiento del empleo se redujo ligeramente, los salarios siguieron aumentando. En términos nominales, los salarios en el sector formal aumentaron 12 por ciento, unos cuantos puntos porcentuales debajo del promedio de los cinco años anteriores (Oficina Nacional de Estadísticas de China 2010f, 131). En términos reales, el aumento fue casi del 13 por ciento. En tercer lugar, el gobierno continuó sus programas de aumento de los pagos a quienes reciben pensiones y de subir los pagos de transferencia a los/as residentes de más bajos ingresos en China. La paga mensual de pensión para los/as jubilados/as de empresas aumentó unos 120 RMB, un 10 por ciento, en enero de 2009, sustancialmente mayor que el incremento del 5,9 por ciento en los precios de los bienes de consumo. Esto elevó el total de los pagos a los/as jubilados/as a alrededor de 75 mil millones RMB. El Ministerio de Asuntos Civiles subió los pagos de transferencia para alrededor de 70 millones de ciudadanos/as de ingresos más bajos en un tercio, para un incremento de 20 mil millones RMB en 2009 (Ministerio de Asuntos Civiles de 2010)”. (“Sosteniendo el crecimiento económico de China después de la crisis financiera global”, Kindle Locations 664-666, Peterson Institute for International Economics)

El Ministerio de Ferrocarriles presentó ocho planes específicos para implementarse en la crisis, a completarse en el 2020. El Banco Mundial lo llamó “quizás el programa individual más grande de inversión de ferrocarril de pasajeros jamás implementado en un país”. Además, se realizaron proyectos de redes de voltaje ultra-alto, entre otros avances.

La lección es que mientras que la anarquía de la producción capitalista mundial invadió a China, los planes racionales y meticulosamente desarrollados para el uso social, superaron la anarquía del mercado capitalista. Esto no solamente protegió a las masas de una crisis de desempleo prolongada y masiva, sino que realmente continuó el proceso de elevar el nivel de vida durante un tiempo en donde cientos de millones de trabajadores/as en todo el mundo capitalista quedaron indefensos/as y traumatizados/as por la crisis de sobreproducción capitalista.

En términos marxistas, el principio de la planificación establecido por la Revolución Socialista China de 1949 — aunque ha sido diluido a la práctica de “orientación” — superó lo que Marx llamó la ley del valor del trabajo, la misma ley que rige el funcionamiento del propio capitalismo. Los dirigentes chinos estuvieron obligados, y tuvieron la capacidad, de utilizar la planificación racional basada en satisfacer las necesidades humanas para superar la catástrofe provocada por su propia política de confiar en el mercado capitalista mundial. □